

On the ergative construction in English and Japanese

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On the ergative Construction in English and Japanese

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1. Introduction

Ergative construction such as (1b) and Spontaneous construction² such as (2b) are thought of as an intransitive construction which has a transitive counterpart such as (1a) in English [*cf.* Keyser and Roeper(1984: 381, henceforth K&R)], and (2a) in Japanese[see Teramura(1982), Nakau(1991), Kageyama(1996), among others].

(1) a. The sun melted the ice.

b. The ice melted. [K&R(1984: 381)]

(2) a. Posutaa-o yabu-tta.

b. Posuta-ga yabur-e-ta.

poster-ACC³ tear-PAST

poster-NOM tear-ERG-PAST

‘Someone tore a poster’

‘The poster tore’

For example, in (1b) and (2b) the noun *ice* and *Posta*[poster] in subject position is not the agent but the theme of the verb *melt* and *yabureru*[tear]. K&R(1984) refer to the intransitive verb *melt* in (1b) as ergative verb construction. Following Kageyama(1996: 139-178), ergative verb *melt* and *yabureru* denote events, processes and changes of state which can be regarded as self-originating(or anti-causativization) in the sense that their occurrence is not necessarily dependent on the intervention of an agent.

In this paper, I will investigate ergative construction's semantic, syntactic relationship and differences in English and Japanese.

Organization of this study is as following. I will explain ergative construction's characteristics in English that is proved by preceding study in section 2. I will investigate that some differences and relationship can be seen in the process of applying English ergative construction's characteristics to

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² Although example (2b) is called spontaneous construction or anti-causative construction in Japanese, I will call them ergative construction from now on in this paper.

³ Abbreviations used are:

ACC=accusative, CAUS=causative, DSE=declarative sentence ending, ERG=ergative, GEN=genitive, IMP=imperative, INS=instrument. LOC=locative, MID=middle, NEG=negative, NOM=nominative, PAST=past, PROG=progressive, TOP=topic, TRANS=transitive marker, VOC=vocative

Japanese V-*e*- type and V-*ar*-type's construction in section 3. Finally, section 4 is the conclusion.

2. Properties of Ergative verbs

Subsequent examples (3)-(10) are typical English ergative constructions.

- (3) Bright flowers grew in the open space.
- (4) The apples ripened in the sun.
- (5) The branch crashed down on my car.
- (6) The plastic bottle crushed against the wall.
- (7) His voice began to change when he was 12 years old.
- (8) This flower closes (up) at night.
- (9) His influence slowly decreased.
- (10) The boiler exploded with a loud noise.

All characteristics of English ergative verb construction that are examined closely by preceding studies. If I summarize them, they are as following[cf. O'Grady(1980), K&R(1984), Kageyama(1996), Washio(1997), among others].

- (11) a. Ergative verb takes the same form as corresponded transitive verb.
 - b. Only CAUSE verb can become ergative verb.
 - c. External agent argument in the syntax does not only realized in ergative verb, but also the existence does not imply in the semantics.
 - d. Ergative verb is non-stative verb.

There is one type of ergative constructions in English, depending on the characteristic of the ergative zero morpheme. The English ergative verbs, which has no specific morpheme to indicate a ergative function. The following examples are from O'Grady(1980: 58):

- (12) a. John boiled the water (13) a. John opened the door.
 - b. The water boiled. b. The door opened.

Other verbs of the ergative in English include the following, all of which can be used both as transitives and intransitives.

- (14) abate, alter, bounce, break, burn, change, close, crash, crack, crush, decrease, diminish, drift, drop, dry, expand, explode, float, freeze, increase, inflate, move, multiply, roll, shatter, sink, split, tear...

Moreover, in English, semantic properties⁴ of nouns and verbs play a crucial role in determining their eligibility for ergative formation. We see that only CAUSE verb (this verb denote change of state of the subject) acceptable ergative verbs. Now let us consider the examples in (15)-(18).

- (15) a. He cut the rope.
 b. *The rope cut.
 b'. The rope broke. [Washio(1997: 73)]
- (16) a. Someone kicked the door.
 b. *The door kicked. (*kick* is a DO verb) [Washio(1997: 73)]
- (17) a. They built a new house.
 b. *A new house built. (*build* is a CREATION verb) [Kageyama(1996: 161)]
- (18) a. They made a model plane.
 b. *A model plane made. (*make* is a CREATION verb) [Kageyama(1996: 193)]

Ergative verbs have meaning that imply one theta role. It is overtly realized in the syntax. This theta role-typically the patient-is assigned to the subject. In addition, agent is not realized in the syntax. Consider the sentence in (19d):

- (19) a. Mary broke the window. b. The window was broken (by Mary).
 c. The window broke. d. *The door broke by Mary.

In addition, agent role is not imply in the semantics. The piece of evidence for the agent role is not imply in ergative comes from the *with great difficulty*, *by itself*, *of its own accord* test. Consider the sentences in (20)-(22):

- (20) The engine started only with great difficulty. [Kageyama(1996: 150)]
 (21) The door opened apparently by itself. [Kageyama(1996: 151)]
 (22) The gate will open of its own accord. [Kageyama(1996: 151)]

K&R(1984) and Kageyama(1996, 2002a) note in their discussion of English ergative verbs, the notion *with great difficulty*, *by itself*, *of its own accord* is compatible only with agentlessness. Thus ergative verbs allow the expression of this notion, because those notion are compatible with agent that is not imply in ergative in the semantics.

The third characteristic of ergative involves aspecture properties of the verb. Ergatives are used to attribute changing of states to subjects and are essentially non-stative, or eventivity. They describe processes or activities that take place at only a specific period or point in time. This can be demonstrated using the *past tense test*, *progressive test*, *agent oriented-adverb test*, *imperative/vocative test*. The expressions of these notions can only be used to refer to events[cf.

⁴ As see in the following sentence, Abstract noun can not become subject in English Ergative Construction.

(i) a. He broke his promise. b. *His promise broke.

Dowty(1979), K&R(1984), Kageyama(1996, 2002a,b)]. Consider the sentences in (23)-(26);

- (23) a. At Yesterday's house party, the kitchen door opened.
 b. Because of the wet weather, I dropped the ball and it bounced. [K&R(1984: 385)]
- (24) a. The boat is sinking.
 b. The door is closing. [K&R(1984: 385)]
- (25) a. *The door opened carefully.
 b. *The door opened unintentionally/reluctantly. [Kageyama(1996: 150)]
- (26) a. Sink, boat!
 b. Close, door! [K&R(1984: 384)]

3. Japanese Ergative Construction(V-*e*-type and V-*ar*-type)

3.1 V-*e*-type and V-*ar*-type

There are two types of ergative constructions in Japanese, depending on the characteristic of the ergative morpheme: (1) the V-*e*-type, and (2) the V-*ar*-type, which has a special morpheme indication the ergative function, which are similar to Korean-2-, -3-, German-1-, Russian or Romance ergative. Consider the two types of ergative constructions from Japanese[(27b), (29b)], in conjunction with Korean-2-, -3- and Italian, French, Russian, German-1- ergatives in (27b)-(38b), respectively.

In a V-*e*-type and a V-*ar*-type construction, the form in (27b) and (29b) are derived from its transitive counterpart. The clitics Φ (zero morpheme), *hi*, *ci*, *sich*, *sebja*, *se*, *si* is added to the verb to indicate a ergative function in Korean (31)-(33), Italian (34b), French (35b), Russian (36b), German (37b), whereas the spontaneous morpheme -*ar*-, -*e*- are added in Japanese (27b) and (29b). Now, consider the sentences in (21)-(38) in Japanese, Korean-1-, -2-, -3-, Italian, French, Russian, German-1-, -2-:

(27) V-*e*- type;

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| a. Taroo-ga | kami-o | yabu-tta. | b. Kami-ga | yabur-e-ta. |
| Taroo-NOM | paper-ACC | tear-PAST | paper-NOM | tear-ERG-PAST |
| 'Taroo tore the paper' | | | 'The paper tore' | |

Other verbs of the V-*e*-type in Japanese include the following.

(28) war-u 'split' → war-*e*-ru, nuk-u 'pull' → nuk-*e*-ru, kudak-u 'shatter' → kudak-*e*-ru, or-u 'break' → or-*e*-ru, hodok-u 'untie' → hodok-*e*-ru, kir-u 'cut' → kir-*e*-ru, tor-u 'catch' → tor-*e*-ru, yabur-u 'tear' → yabur-*e*-ru, yak-u 'burn' → yak-*e*-ru

(29) V-*ar*-type;

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| a. Taroo-ga | semento-o | katam-e-ta. | b. Semento-ga | katam- <i>ar</i> -u. |
| Taroo-NOM | cement-ACC | harden-TRANS-PAST | cement-NOM | harden-ERG-DSE |
| 'Taroo hardened the cement' | | | 'The cement hardened' | |

Other verbs of the V-*ar*- type in Japanese include the following.

- (30) *katam-e-ru* 'harden' → *katam-ar-u*, *atatam-e-ru* 'warm(up)' → *atatam-ar-u* 'get warm', *mag-e-ru* 'bend' → *mag-ar-u*, *tom-e-ru* 'stop' → *tom-ar-u*, *tam-e-ru* 'accumulate' → *tam-ar-u*, *tsum-e-ru* 'pack' → *tsum-ar-u*, *u-e-r-u* 'plant' → *uw-ar-u*, *atsum-e-ru* 'collect' → *atsum-ar-u*, *maz-e-ru* 'mix' → *maz-ar-u*, *itam-e-ru* 'fry' → *itam-ar-u*, *husag-u* 'close' → *husag-ar-u*, *usum-e-ru* 'thin' → *usum-ar-u*, *tasuk-e-ru* 'help' → *tasuk-ar-u*

(31) Korean-1-

- a. John-i thurek-ul wumciki-ess-ta
John-NOM truck-ACC move-PAST-DSE
'John moved the truck'
- b. Thurek-i wumcik-ess-ta.
truck-NOM move-PAST-DSE
'The truck moved'

(32) Korean-2-

- a. John-i kwulttwuk-ul mak-ass-ta.
John-NOM chimney-ACC stop up-PAST-DSE
'John stopped up the chimney'
- b. Kwulttwuk-i mak-*hi*-ess-ta.
chimney-NOM stop up-ERG-DSE
'The chimney is stopped up'

(33) Korean-3-

- a. Mary-ka kkochppyeng-ul kkay-ess-ta.
Mary-NOM vase-ACC break-PAST-DSE
'Mary broke the vase'
- b. Kkochppyeng-i cecello kkay-*ci*-ess-ta.
vase-NOM all by itself break-ERG-PAST-DSE
'The vase broke all by itself'

(34) Italian [Cinque(1988: 565)]

- a. Antonio ruppe' la macchina b. La macchina si ruppe
'Antonio broke the car' 'The car broke'

(35) French

- a. Marie a ferme la porte. b. La porte *se*'st ferme'e.
'Marie closed the door' 'The door closed'

(36) Russian

- a. Ivan razbil gorshok. b. Gorshok razbilsja.
'Ivan broke a jar' 'The jar broke'

(37) German-1-

- a. Hans hat die Tür geöffnet. b. Die Tür hat *sich* geöffnet.
'Hans opened the door' 'The door opened'

(38) German-2- [Ooya(1997: 72)]

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Michael bricht die Vase. | b. Die Vase bricht. |
| ‘Michael breaks the vase’ | ‘the vase breaks’ |

3.2 V-*e*-type and V-*ar*-type and argument against Kageyama(1996)

Kageyama(1996: 184) has defined V-*e*- and V-*ar*- intransitive constructions based on semantic properties; that is V-*e*- intransitive construction which has the spontaneous (anti-causative; as taking place without the intervention of an external agent) function by the -*e*- morpheme, but V-*ar*- intransitive construction which has not. One can cite following Kageyama(1996: 185-190)'s examples which seem to support this. Consider the sentences in (39)-(41);

- (39) Totte-ga gatteni hazur-*e*-ta.
grip-NOM of its own accord get out of(place)-ERG-PAST
‘The grip got out of place of its own accord.’
- (40) a.*?Hidaride-o tsukatte, peezi-ga mekur-*e*-ta.
left hand-ACC use page-NOM turn over-ERG-DSE
‘I used the left hand, and a page of the book turned over.’
b.*?Doitsusee-no hasami-de, nuno-ga teineini kir-*e*-ta.
made in German-GEN scissors-INS cloth-NOM thoroughly snip-ERG-PAST
‘I used the scissors made in German, and the cloths snipped thoroughly.’
c.*?Kureen-o tsukatte, youyaku sono ookina ki-ga uw-*at*-ta.
crane-ACC use finally the large tree-NOM plant-ERG-PAST
‘I used the crane, and finally the large tree transplanted.’
- (41) a. Roopu-yo, kir-*e*-nai dekure! [V-*e*-]
rope-VOC break-ERG-NEG IMP
‘Don't break, rope.’
b. Himo-yo, hodok-*e*-ru na! [V-*e*-]
string-VOC untie-ERG-DSE NEG IMP
‘Don't untie, string.’
c.*E-yo, kabe-ni umaku kak-*ar*-e! [V-*ar*-]
picture-VOC wall-LOC well hang-IMP
‘Picture, hang well on the wall.’

There is considerable validity to Kageyama(1996)'s argument. However, there are three major problems with his analysis, seeking to show that the V-*e*- construction is a true ergative construction; First problem is that he suggests examples to sustain his own viewpoint prove. I will discuss this point at section 3.3 and 3.4. Second problem is that he argues that spontaneous meaning is materialized by specific form, that is V-*e*- form. Third problem is that V-*e*- construction permits interpretations except spontaneous unlike Kageyama (1996)'s study. Consider the examples in (42a)-(42c).

- (42) a. Zakuro-ga war-*e*-ta. [spontaneous interpretation]
 pomegranate-NOM crack-ERG-PAST
 ‘a pomegranate cracked.’
 b. Garasu-ga gonagonani war-*e*-ta. [resultative interpretation]
 glass-NOM into bits break-ERG-PAST
 ‘The glass broke into bits.’
 c. Kono mokuzai-wa tayasuku war-*e*-ru. [middle interpretation]
 this wood-TOP easily split-MID-DSE
 ‘This wood splits easily.’

3.3 Ergative formation

As you see in examples (43), ergative verb is made from CAUSE verb in Japanese as well as in English.⁵

- (43) a. Ito-ga kir-*e*-ta. b. Yasai-ga ni-*e*-ta.
 string-NOM break-ERG-PAST vegetable-NOM boil-ERG-PAST
 ‘the string broke.’ ‘the vegetables boiled.’

As we see in example (44), ergative verb is not made from creation verb in English. The following examples are from Kageyama(1996: 193):

- (44) a. She baked a cake→*A cake baked.
 b. They made a model plane→*A model plane made.
 c. He dug a big hole in the backyard→*A big hole dug in the backyard.

But unlike example (44) in English, as we see in examples (45)-(50), there seems to be an occasion that creation verb except only CAUSE verb can become ergative verb in Japanese. Kageyama(1996: 193), he claims that these examples[(45)-(50)] are ergative verb construction actually. The following examples are from Kageyama(1996: 193):

- (45) a. Gohan-o tai-ta. (*taku* is a CREATION verb)
 rice-ACC cook-PAST
 ‘someone cooked the rice.’
 b. Gohan-ga tak-*e*-ta.
 rice-NOM cook-ERG-PAST
 ‘the rice cooked.’
 (46) a. Uraniwa-ni ana-o ho-tta. (*horu* is a CREATION verb)
 backyard-LOC hole-ACC dig-PAST

⁵ We have seen that CAUSE verb in English become ergative verb, but there is an occasion that it can not become ergative verb though it is CAUSE verb. [see Kageyama(1996, 2002a)]

- ‘Someone dug a hole in the backyard.’
- b. Uraniwa-ni ana-ga hor-e-ta.
backyard-LOC hole-NOM dig-ERG-PAST
‘A hole dug in the backyard.’
- (47) a. Kireina seetaa-o an-da. (*amu* is a CREATION verb)
pretty sweater-ACC knit-PAST
‘Someone knitted a pretty sweater.’
- b. Kireina seetaa-ga am-e-ta.
pretty sweater-NOM knit-ERG-PAST
‘A pretty sweater knitted.’
- (48) a. Hotto keeki-o yai-ta. (*yaku* is a CREATION verb)
hot cake-ACC bake-PAST
‘Someone baked a hot cake.’
- b. Hotto keeki-ga yak-e-ta.
hot cake-NOM bake-ERG-PAST
‘A hot cake baked.’
- (49) a. Tempura-o age-ta. (*ageru* is a CREATION verb)
deep-fried food-ACC fry-PAST
‘Someone fried a *tempura*.’
- b. Tempura-ga ag-at-ta.
deep-fried food-NOM fry-ERG-PAST
‘A *tempura* fried.’
- (50) a. Kireina sembazuru-o ot-ta. (*oru* is a CREATION verb)
pretty paper crane-ACC fold-PAST
‘Someone folded(up) a pretty sembazuru.’
- b. Kireina sembazuru-ga or-e-ta.
pretty paper crane-NOM fold-ERG-PAST
‘A pretty Sembazuru folded.’

Viewpoint of Kageyama(1996) can be summarized as following; Creation verb can not become ergative verb in English but become ergative verb in Japanese. But I claim that the verb of examples (45)-(50) are potential verb of V-*e*-type and not ergative verb. Because they not co-occurent with spontaneous adverb *hitorideni*[all by itself], *gatteni*[of its own accord]that exclude external agent's participation. Verb in (51) should co-occurent with spontaneous adverb *hitorideni* if it is ergative verb.

- (51) a.*Gohan-ga *hitorideni* tak-e-ta. b.*Kireina seetaa-ga *hitorideni* am-e-ta.
rice-NOM by itself cook-ERG-PAST pretty sweater-NOM by itself knit-ERG-PAST
‘the rice cooked all by itself.’ ‘A pretty sweater knitted all by itself.’

I think that problem that is caused in study of Kageyama(1996) originates from which potential verb and ergative verb adopt same form. However, as we saw examples (45)-(50), compared to the fact that the potential verb does productive[see Ijima(1993), Cheon(1998a)], these same form is shown differentia in terms of ergative verb does non-productive. I think the cause that these differences happen are Japanese potential marker, that is, -e- morpheme's high productivity. Therefore, we can think that examples (45)-(50) denote potential usage that do not denote ergative usage.

V-*e*-type's ergative verb of Japanese adopts other form with corresponded transitive verb 'unlike English ergative verb. Therefore we need to consider semantic rule's existence⁶ that permits ergative usage in Japanese.

3.4 Non-implicit agent

As we saw in section 2, English ergative construction can co-occur with such *with great difficulty*, *by itself*, *of its own accord* phrases. If study of Kageyama(1996) is correct, only V-*e*- construction can co-occur(or apply) causative expression, the phrases *itsunomanika*[before one knows], *hitorideni*[by itself], purpose clause, entailment test, do-test. Since they are incompatible with the implied agent. However, as the following sentences show, V-*e*- construction not allow these phrases and tests. In contrast, V-*ar*-(V-*rare*-) construction can co-occur(or apply) with such phrases and tests.

- (52) a. Katam-*ar*-u mamani zerii-o katam-*ar*-ase-te oku yori shikata-ga nai.⁷ [V-*ar*-]
 harden-ERG-DSE to jelly-ACC harden-ERG-CAUS leave than to do-NOM nothing
 'There is nothing to do but leave a jelly to harden.'
 b. *Nuk-*e*-ru mamani goboo-o nuk-*e*-sase te oku yori shikata-ga nai. [V-*e*-]
 pull-ERG-DSE to burdock-ACC pull-ERG-CAUS leave than to do-NOM
 'There is nothing to do but leave a burdock to pull.'
- (53) a. Zerii-ga itsunomanika katam-*at*-ta. [V-*ar*-]
 jelly-NOM before one knows harden-ERG-PAST
 'The jelly hardened before one knows.'
 b. *Daikon-ga hitorideni nuk-*e*-ta. [V-*e*-]
 Japanese radish-NOM all by itself pull-ERG-PAST
 'A Japanese radish pulled all by itself.'
- (54) a. Zerii-ga itsunomanika katam-*ar*-tta to iu koto-wa, zeri-ga
 jelly-NOM before one knows harden-ERG-PAST thing-TOP jelly-NOM
 dooka-shita koto-o gani suru.⁸ [V-*ar*-]
 something-did thing-ACC entail do
 'From the fact that the jelly hardened before one knows, it therefore entails that the jelly did something.'

⁶ I have ever proposed semantic rule(the rule of ergative formation) in Cheon (1998b).

⁷ This test quoted in Kuroda(1993).

- b.*Goboo-ga nuk-e-ta to iu koto-wa goboo-ga dookashitakoto-o gani suru. [V-e-]
 burdock-NOM pull-ERG-PAST thing-TOP burdock-NOM
 ‘From the fact that a burdock pulled, it therefore follows that a burdock did something.’
- (55) a.*Watashi-ga shi-ta koto-wa haha-no sugata-ga mi-e-ta koto dearu. [V-e-]
 I -NOM do-PAST thing-TOPmother-GEN appearance-NOM see-ERG-PAST
 ‘What I did was my mother saw.’
- b.*Watashi-ga shi-ta koto-wa seisyun zidai-no koto-ga natukashim-are-ta koto dearu.
 I-NOM do-PAST thing-TOP youthful day-GEN rember-ERG-PAST
 ‘What I did was to miss my youthful day.’
- (56) a.*[Kokoro-o shizumeru tameni] nami-no oto-ga kiko-e-ru. [V-e-]
 heart-ACC calm to wave-GEN sound-NOM hear-ERG-DSE
 ‘The sound of the wave hear to calm down me.’
- b.*[Seisyo-no koto-o shiru tameni] mainichiyoo-no seishyo-no hanashi-ga
 Bible-GEN thing-ACC know to every sunday-GEN bible-GEN story-NOM
 mat-are-ru. [V-ar-]
 wait-ERG-DSE
 ‘The Bible's story wait on every sunday to know about it.’

The implicit agent argument in ergatives may never appear overtly. As we see following sentence (57)-(58), the V-e- and V-ar- construction are unacceptable with an agent in a by-phrase.

- (57)*Daikon-ga Taroo-ni yotte nuk-e-ta. [V-e-]
 radish-NOM Taroo-by pull-ERG-PAST
 ‘The radish pulled by Taroo’
- (58)*Shi-no syokuin-ni yotte sakura-no ki-ga uw-at-ta. [V-ar-]
 city hall-GEN employee-by cherry blossoms-GEN tree-NOM plant-ERG-PAST
 ‘The cherry blossoms tree planted by the City hall employee’

3.5 Non-stative

The last characteristic of ergative involves its non-stative or eventive nature, since it appears with the progressive formation, past tense, vocative and imperative. We will apply each individual diagnostic to the V-e- and V-ar- construction of Japanese. Consider the sentences in (59a)-(61a).

- (59) a. Hon-ga ur-e- teiru. [V-e-]
 book-NOM sell-ERG PROG
 ‘The books are selling.’
- b.*Kono yoohuku-wa yoku ara-e-teiru. [V-e-]
 this suit-TOP well wash-ERG-PROG
 ‘This suit are washing well.’

⁸ This test quoted in Cruse(1973).

- c. Harigane-ga mag-at-teiru. [V-*ar*-]
 wire-NOM bend-ERG-PROG
 ‘A wire is bending.’
- (60) a. Hurui kuruma-ga sammanen-de ur-e-ta. [V-*e*-]
 used car-NOM ¥30,000 for sell-ERG-PAST
 ‘A used car sold for ¥30,000 yesterday.’
- b. Sutoobu-de heya-ga atatam-at-ta. [V-*ar*-]
 stove-INS room-NOM warm-ERG-PAST
 ‘A room became warm with stove.’
- (61) a. Shimi-yo, kireini tor-e-tekure. [V-*e*-]
 stain-VOC clearly remove-ERG-IMP
 ‘Remove a stain, clearly.’
- b. Konkuriito-yo, hayaku katam-at-tekure. [V-*ar*-]
 concrete-VOC quickly harden-ERG-IMP
 ‘Harden concrete, quickly.’

As the above sentences show, V-*e*- construction (not) allow progressive formation, past tense, vocative and imperative. V-*ar*- construction can co-occur with progressive expression, past tense marker, vocative and imperative.

In sum, we have seen that the V-*e*- and V-*ar*- in Japanese do not have any properties of a true ergative. As we have seen, the V-*e*- and V-*ar*- construction shows no sign of an ergative formation (i.e. CAUSE verb, DO verb, and CREATION verb relationship) and an agent argument (i.e. by-phrase, *all by itself* test, entailment test). Moreover, neither the V-*e*- nor V-*ar*- construction non-stative, which are a necessary condition for ergative. The tests for non-stative that we have applied involve past tense, progressive, agent-oriented adverb, imperative/vocative. Contrary to what we would expect if V-*e*- or V-*ar*- were ergatives, the V-*e*- and V-*ar*- constructions (not) occur with past tense, progressive, agent-oriented adverb, imperative/vocative. The following table summaries these points.

	Japanese		English
	V- <i>e</i> -	V- <i>ar</i> -	
1. Same morpheme	No	No	Yes
2. Ergative formation			
CAUSE verb	Yes	Yes	Yes
DO verb	Yes	Yes	No
CREATION verb	Yes	Yes	No
Abstract noun ⁹	No	Yes/No	No
3. Agent argument			
by-phrase	Yes/No	Yes/No	No
all by itself	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes
off its own accord	-	-	Yes
with great difficulty	-	-	Yes
entailment test	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes
4. Non-stative			
past tense	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes
progressive	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes
agent-oriented adverb	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes
imperative/vocative	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have noted that ergative constructions in English have the following unique properties: (1) same morpheme, (2) Ergative formation, (3) agent argument, (4) Non stative(eventive). We have also shown that there are two types of potential ergative verbs(i.e. spontaneous verb) in Japanese(V-*e*- and V-*ar*-), based on the lexical criteria for being ergative. Based on the properties of the ergative construction and tests for each property, however, we can conclude that Japanese does not have a canonical ergative construction. Contrary to the argument of the existence of the spontaneous(or anti-causative) voice[see Teramura(1982), Kageyama(1996), (2002)], Japanese has been shown to be a language in which the spontaneous construction is subsumed in other

⁹ As see in the following sentence, Abstract noun can not become subject in Japanese V-*e*- Construction. However, Abstract noun can become in V-*ar*- Construction.

- (i) a. Seizika-ga yakusoku-o yabut-ta.
 Politician-NOM promise-ACC broke-PAST
 ‘The politician broke his promise.’
 b.*Seizika-no yakusoku-ga yabur-e-ta. [V-*e*-]
 Politician-GEN promise-NOM broke-ERG-PAST
 ‘The politician’s promise broke.’
 (ii) Shinkei-ga yasum-ar-u. [V-*ar*-]
 nerve-NOM well-ERG-DSE
 ‘Nerve become well.’

constructions. While the specific morpheme, ergative formation, agent argument test are not necessary applicable to V-*e-* and V-*ar-* patterns, the lack of Non-stative(eventive) provides evidence that these two types are indeed not true ergatives.

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